

## Members of the Senate Health Committee:

My name is Craig Elford, a physical therapist from Midland. I have spent the past 15 years successfully treating clients who suffer from neurological, orthopedic and sports related injuries. My formal education has included 5 years of undergraduate education, 3 years of graduate level physical therapy school, 2 years of a university based post-graduate residency program which culminated in specialist certification in Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy. In addition I have successfully completed numerous continuing educational courses, served as an adjunct faculty member at two universities in the state of Michigan where I instructed orthopedics and manual therapy, and have received national certification as a strength and conditioning specialist.

Within the Mid-Michigan region where I co-own and operate a private physical therapy clinic, many of my patients, referring physicians, peers, and local community members may consider me a specialist in orthopedics and manual therapy. At a minimum I am considered an excellent resource that many local athletes, coaches, and healthcare providers seek advice from when dealing with orthopedic and sport related training and injury prevention issues.

**I am NOT trying to be boastful** here as there are many other excellent therapists in our region all with similar backgrounds and qualifications. I simply want to make the point that despite the obvious qualifications, current laws in Michigan regarding Direct Access for physical therapists greatly limit our ability to provide necessary services to the community. In addition, current laws greatly limit our ability to pursue and develop various business opportunities including the ability to provide personal training, injury prevention programs, massage therapy, and various other options which we are clearly best suited to provide.

There are many examples available however one specific situation in which the current law limits a PT's business potential involves our professions inability to provide and charge for "personal training" services. In Michigan, a PT may evaluate and provide advice however cannot "treat" or design a program to manage any condition without a prescription from a physician. This literally means that unless that person (whether healthy or injured) seeks out and receives a prescription for physical therapy, any licensed therapist cannot legally treat and manage this potential client. To do so without a prescription places the therapist at severe risk of malpractice claims, legal consequences, and could potentially lead to a loss of licensure. Meanwhile, literally any person in the state, including those in attendance today who DO NOT possess a license to practice physical therapy, may legally solicit, provide, and implement specific exercise and "treatment" programs and charge the consumer for their services--something which is illegal for a physical therapist to currently

do! Likewise, it has become common for many chiropractic centers to advertise "rehabilitation and training services" whereby much lesser trained massage therapists, personal trainers, and office technicians are largely responsible for the delivery of the training programs. I sincerely hope that you can all see the irony in this current situation, one which has largely been perpetuated and supported by lobbyists who are clearly only looking out for those whom they represent rather than for the citizens of the state of Michigan.

In closing, the lack of direct access to physical therapy services in Michigan imposes unnecessary limitations on an entire profession whose educational background clearly places them among the most highly trained and skilled providers available--particularly in the field of orthopedics, sports medicine, and athletic training. Not only do current laws limit a physical therapist's ability to pursue and develop high quality ancillary services and business opportunities but they also limit the public's access to the exact professionals who are best prepared and trained to provide these programs. I sincerely ask you to support SB 690 and allow direct access to physical therapy services in Michigan.

Sincerely,

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